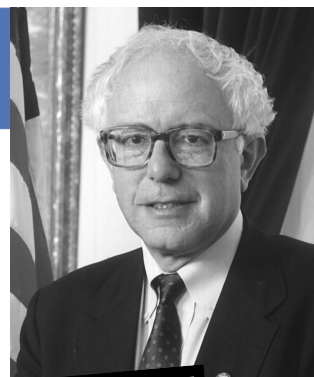




U.S. Representative

**Bernie Sanders**

*A Special Focus on Veterans' Issues*



WINTER 2001/02

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

*Dear Vermont Veteran,*

Knowing your interest in veterans' issues I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on developments in Washington and to invite you to one of the Congressional Town Meetings that I will be holding on veterans issues. These meetings will focus on making sure that all Vermont veterans and their families know their rights, and know about the benefits to which they're entitled. Joining me will be my Veterans Specialist, Sam Haskin, who is well known to many in Vermont's veterans community. Especially now, at a time when we have American servicemen and women in harm's way overseas, we must recommit ourselves to the goal of ensuring that the needs of America's veterans – both present and future – do not go unmet.

As many of you know, there has been some success in the last few years in finally getting the federal government to own up to its obligations to the men and women who answered their country's call. In the area of health care, in particular, we have made some important strides forward. Some of the items on which we have made some progress include:

- a. Increasing VA health care spending by some \$4 billion over the last three years.
- b. Getting Congress to finally begin fixing the inequities in the Military Retiree Health care program.
- c. For the third year in a row the Vermont delegation has secured an additional \$7.2 million for the White River Jct. VA hospital.
- d. The Defense Department is now accepting proposals for a \$1 million research program that I had added to last year's Defense spending bill. This program is for cutting-edge research into Persian Gulf War illness and its possible links to chemical exposure. I am delighted that after years of stonewalling the VA finally acknowledges that Americans who served in the Gulf War are nearly twice as likely to develop Lou Gehrig's Disease as are other military personnel.
- e. Adult-onset diabetes has been added to the list of conditions presumptively linked to Agent Orange exposure. That means that the many Vietnam veterans who have diabetes are now eligible for service connected benefits.
- f. As a result of the outreach efforts that the VA and my office have undertaken hundreds more Vermont veterans are now taking advantage of the VA pharmaceutical program which provides low-priced prescription drugs.

Finally, let me repeat an appeal to veterans that many of you may have heard me make before. And that is, every eligible veteran and every eligible member of a veteran's family should take advantage of the veterans' benefits to which they are entitled. No matter how good those programs are, they won't help anyone if people don't take advantage of them.

To hear more about veterans issues and the benefits you may be entitled to, I invite you to join me at one of the Congressional Town Meetings on Veterans Issues that I will be holding. Details about the meeting can be found on the back. I also urge you to contact my office if you are experiencing problems with your veterans benefits or have questions about what benefits are available and whether you qualify. The toll free number in Vermont is 1-800-339-9834. Finally, please visit my website at [bernie.house.gov](http://bernie.house.gov) for frequently updated information about important issues facing veterans and the nation.

Sincerely yours,

*Bernie*  
Bernard Sanders  
U.S. Congressman

*Did you know?*

Through the VA, veterans are eligible for a substantial reduction in the cost of prescription drugs. You can get a 30-day supply with only a small copayment. Participating in the VA health care system has also gotten more convenient and less expensive as the outpatient copayment has been lowered to \$15.00. The VA runs a number of outpatient clinics throughout the state to serve veterans in Vermont. There are now clinics in the Burlington area, the St. Johnsbury area, in Rutland, and in Bennington. This, of course, is in addition to the White River Jct. facility.

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
*Official Business*

*Bernie Sanders*

M.C.  
Pre-Sorted  
Standard

*If you receive more than one copy of this newsletter, we apologize. Please feel free to pass the extra copy along to an interested friend.*

*This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.*

Please Join Bernie at a  
Congressional Town Meeting on Veterans' Issues

Springfield

Saturday, Jan. 26, 2002

10 am – Noon

VFW Post #771

VFW Drive • Springfield

Manchester

Monday, Jan. 28, 2002

2 pm – 4 pm

VFW Post #6471

Depot St., Rt. 30 • Manchester Ctr.

Poultney

Monday, Jan. 28, 2002

7 pm – 9 pm

Poultney Legion Post #39

37 Main Street • Poultney

St. Albans

Saturday, March 2, 2002

10 am – Noon

St. Albans Legion Post #1

100 Parah Drive • St. Albans

Orleans

Monday, March 4, 2002

2 pm – 4 pm

Orleans Legion Post #23

Water St. • Orleans

Bradford

Monday, March 4, 2002

7 pm – 9 pm

Bradford Legion Post #20

Goshen Rd., Rt. 25B • Bradford

Contact Information for Veterans

State Veterans Affairs Office Montpelier ..... 828-3379

Vermont Veterans Home Bennington..... 442-6353

VA Regional Office (*Benefits and Assistance*)

White River Jct. .... 296-5177

Toll-free ..... 800-827-1000

Medical Center White River Jct. .... 295-9363

VA Outreach Clinic White River Jct. .... 866-687-8387

VA Outpatient Clinics Burlington ..... 655-1356

Bennington..... 447-6913

Rutland ..... 773-3386

St. Johnsbury..... 603-444-9328

South Burlington ..... 862-1806

White River Junction ..... 295-2908

Toll-free ..... 800-649-6603

Dept. of Veterans Affairs

Acquisition Resources

Service (*businesses*) ..... 202-273-8815

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business

Utilization ..... 202-565-8124

Director for Information Management Service

(*Freedom of Information Act Requests*) ..... 202-273-8135

To report waste or abuse in the DVA:

Inspector General's Hotline. .... 800-488-8244

Annual Report - write to the Analysis and Reports Service;  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW; Washington, D.C. 20420